



Healthwatch Surrey

PPG Fact Finder Analysis - November 2016

Background

The National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP) describes the ways an effective PPG can benefit the Surgery and its patients as follows;

Health Promotion: Many PPGs support their GP surgery through running health promotion events, on issues ranging from smoking to fitness and well-being to weight management.

Communicating to patient population: PPGs can find ways to effectively engage with the patient population, through patient surveys, regular newsletters and distribution of information.

Patient Voice: Providing a mechanism for patients to feedback to their surgery is vitally important.

Implementing Practical Change: PPGs can make a real impact on the things that matter within a practice e.g. new services, revamped the surgery surroundings, or helped deliver more flexible opening times.

Recruiting new members: Looking for new ways to recruit new members for the PPG.

Creating local networks: Creating links with other PPGs in the area is a great way to share knowledge and maximise impact.

Through our PPG work we set out to investigate further if these principles worked in practice and dig deeper into what makes an effective PPG. So as part of the PPG Project work, five volunteers attended 12 PPG meetings¹ to gather information from the PPGs regarding;

- What works well
- Areas that need improvement
- Or areas PPGs they specifically need help with e.g. member recruitment/social media.

This document collates the feedback from the PPGs attended and looks at common themes and best practice.

Methodology

Phase 1: Desk-based research of all the 130 surgeries in Surrey allowed us to group the surgeries into 3 groups;

¹ The surgeries attended/completing the fact finders include; St Stephens House, Wall House Surgery, Birchwood Practice, Pirbright Surgery, Haslemere Health Centre, Fairlands Medical Practice, Ashlea Medical, Moat House Surgery, Cranleigh Medical Practice, Dapdune Medical, Hawthorns Practice, Studholme Surgery

- Tier 1: Active PPG with regular meetings and activity
- Tier 2: PPG exists but has not been active recently/virtual but with activity
- Tier 3: Virtual PPG no activity shown /no details of PPG on site

Phase 2: Training for five Healthwatch Volunteers was developed and delivered, briefing them on how to conduct the project activity.

Phase 3: Working with Healthwatch Volunteers as well as two PPG chairs, we developed the Fact Finder Analysis² questions to help us understand more about the PPG groups. A number of PPGs across each CCG area were approached by the volunteers via the Chairs or Practice managers, with 12 surgeries taking part in the final study. The volunteers then discussed a number of predetermined questions in the Fact Finder Sheet before reporting their findings back to the central Healthwatch team. The Fact Finder sheet comprised of 10 questions and a space for any other feedback. The collated findings and common themes for each question will now be explored.

Question 1: What do you feel makes a successful PPG?

The key points that came out from discussions with PPGs from 12 surgeries regarding what they felt makes a successful PPG were;

- Commitment, time and enthusiasm from members of the PPG group
- Commitment and support of surgery staff (e.g. attending meetings, member recruitment)
- Collaboration and information exchange between surgery staff and PPG members
- Strong chairperson (or “Champion”) leading the group
- Recognition from the practice that the PPG can add value to the service provided to patients and the general operation of the practice.

So in sum, it was felt that it was vital to have dedicated PPG members with the enthusiasm and time to drive the group forward. This is underpinned by support and recognition from the surgery staff which allows an open and honest dialogue and the sharing of information. With a mutual respect and trust between the surgery and the PPG group then the PPG can function successfully.

Question 2: What were/are the barriers to setting up a PPG?

A common barrier for all PPGs involved in the study is recruiting a diverse demographic of people to attend the group and this came out strongly across all the surgeries visited. The

² See Appendix for example of the Fact Finder Sheet

difficulty in recruiting younger and harder to reach patients makes it difficult to obtain a cross sectional view of the surgeries patients. The common barriers included;

- Recruitment of a diverse and representative PPG group
- Retention and motivation of existing PPG members
- Getting 'buy in' / support from GPs at the surgery and getting them to attend the meetings to represent the surgery
- Establishing a primary purpose of the group to give clear direction and ensuring that personal agendas are not brought to the group
- Ensuring members are there to constructively contribute to meetings
- Finding the right time to meet to allow a cross section of the surgery to attend e.g. day vs evening meetings

Question 3: How were they overcome?

From our analysis it appears that some barriers were easier to overcome than others. The barriers to recruitment of a diverse group is something that remains a problem for many of the surgeries.

Some have overcome this by having a [virtual PPG³](#) that runs alongside the face to face groups so that questions can be relayed to a wider group for comment and feed in to the formal meetings without the need to physically attend. Those surgeries that implement this as a strategy feel that it helps broaden the spectrum of views coming into the PPG group.

Having clearly [defined goals and objectives](#) laid down in a [Terms of Reference](#) document can help to overcome the clarity issues on what the main purpose of the PPG is. Some surgeries have also developed a [list of priorities, projects or a "wish list"](#) (which allows their attention to be focussed on priorities and not led off on a tangent in meetings). It was felt that having [clearly established ground rules](#) at the start of the meetings helped to keep things moving in the right direction. It was also considered helpful to review the [achievements of the PPG](#) on a regular basis to help with motivation of members and recognition from the surgery.

[Recruitment drives](#) are one way of trying to increase diversity of membership with in surgery advertising and in local libraries. Some surgeries also got a helping hand from GPs to identify patients that could join the group (though there was some question over retention of these members who may just be attending to please the GP).

The PPGs from surgeries that attended the PPG chairs forums e.g. Guildford & Waverley and Surrey Downs felt that the [sharing of information between surgeries](#) was beneficial in overcoming barriers.

Question 4: What additional resource do you feel would help your PPG run more effectively?

³ A Virtual PPG is a database of email addresses for patients that can feed into the decision making of the surgery without physically attending the face to face meetings.

There were common themes that emerged across the PPGs when asked what additional resources would help them;

- Awareness Raising - branding an identity for the PPG, support communication events, leaflets explaining what the PPG is/benefits of the PPG, help with the production of newsletters
- Social media - help setting up Facebook/Twitter/management of the website
- Networking/best practice sharing - ways to share information with other surgeries to get ideas even across CCG borders
- Ideas for income generation - how do others fundraise/generate income e.g. one surgery is thinking of selling advertising space in the PPG/surgery newsletter.

Overall awareness and communication of the PPGs existence and activity came out strongly as an area where surgery PPGs felt they could use additional resource.

Question 5: What changes have been implemented due to PPG involvement in your surgery?

The analysis highlighted the diverse and positive contribution that PPGs can make to the surgery with input into changes such as opening times and phone systems, practical support on vaccination clinics and improving the look and feel of the surgery for patients. Here are some examples;

- Changes to opening times (evening surgeries / weekend opening)
- Changes / improvements to the phone system (queuing system / triage system for appointments)
- Newsletters
- Helping at the Flu Clinic
- Purchasing new equipment (fundraising) e.g. heart monitor, reception privacy screens, Doppler's (for measuring baby's heartrate for pregnant women)
- Refurbishment - décor, surroundings, litter control
- Patient Education events - e.g. Alzheimer's, Diabetes, Men's Health etc.
- Awareness raising (e.g. raising awareness of the impact/cost of missed appointments to other patients)
- Help with preparations for CQC visits
- Articles in the local press

Question 6: Have you got any examples of what a good PPG can achieve?

The following were identified as key achievements:

- It was felt that a good PPG could achieve effective communication to patient groups and make health matters more widely known through education days/events.

- It was felt that a PPG which works in collaboration with the surgery staff can influence and bring about change that is of benefit to the patients within its surgery, such as appointment improvements /opening times/phone system.
- It was felt that a good PPG gives the patients a voice in practice decisions.

Question 7: How do you promote and recruit new members to your PPG?

The ways used to recruit new members to the PPG were similar across all those completing the FactFinder. These included;

- Newsletters
- Emails/website/social media
- Flyers/posters/TV screens in the Surgery
- Invites in the ‘welcome pack’ for new patients
- GPs targeting patients
- Word of mouth
- Dedicated PPG noticeboard
- Patient days/attending events e.g. village shows

Question 8: Does your PPG engage with other PPGs in the area?

Whilst not all PPGs engaged with other PPGs they could see the benefit in sharing best practice. Those that did attend the PPG chairs forums felt they were a way to meet other PPGs, understand their projects and any barriers they may be facing.

Question 9: How involved are the Practice Staff in the PPG?

All the surgeries we visited felt they had good support from practice staff, with (on most occasions) someone from the surgery attending the meetings. This was felt to be integral to the success of the PPG group.

In sum, this FactFinder analysis allowed us to dig deeper into the PPGs we visited to understand what they felt makes them effective, what barriers they face and what a good PPG can achieve. The conclusion from the FactFinder shows that with committed members a “Champion/Chair” and supportive practice staff the PPG can overcome barriers and implement changes that benefit not only them but the other patients and staff within the surgery. A good PPG gives the patient a “voice” within surgery decisions they may not otherwise have, but it is important that PPGs consider ways in which they can reach out and try to involve a wider cross section of patients, in an attempt to make this voice as representative of the patient group as possible.

How we can help...

As overall awareness and communications came out strongly as an area where surgeries felt they needed help and resource. We will now investigate what Healthwatch Surrey can do to help in this area.

All surgeries visited felt that it was beneficial for their members to be aware of Healthwatch Surrey and the work we do. Therefore, we will continue to build relationships and spread the word through meeting with other PPGs across the county.

Next Steps...

There will be a briefing and workshop with team members and volunteers involved in the project that will be held in December. In this we will look at the findings of the project so far and what we as Healthwatch Surrey can produce to help PPGs communicate and raise awareness with their patient groups.

During this meeting there will also be a briefing on how Healthwatch can continue raising awareness with PPGs across each of the CCG groups.

PPG Case Study

Case Study : Autism Project, Ashlea Medical Practice (Linden House and Gilbert House Surgery)

Working with one of the Doctors the PPG helped carry out a project on Autism and the Autistic spectrum in those under 18 and as a result improvements were made at both the surgeries to help those with Autism and their families.

A questionnaire completed by a group of patients identified the need for continuity in seeing the same GP on each visit as a result each of the surgeries now has a dedicated doctor to work with these families. It also identified the fact that as some autistic patients fear crowded spaces, the waiting room can be a difficult place for them when visiting the GP surgery. On the back of this these patients will be offered early or late appointment times when the waiting room is quieter. If a separate room is available for them to wait, then this will also be offered.

The project also identified the need for patients diagnosed with Autism to know where to go for help and advice. Therefore, a document was produced that detailed all the useful contact information which has proved to be a valuable resource to patients at their time of diagnosis.

Appendix - Fact Finder Sheet

Surgery Name:	No: in PPG face to face
PPG Chair:	No: in virtual PPG
Date attended:	Meeting frequency:

➤ What makes a successful PPG?

➤ What were/are the barriers to setting up a PPG?

➤ How were these barriers overcome?

- What additional resource do you feel would help your PPG run more effectively?
e.g. help with member recruitment, fundraising ideas, website, newsletter, social media presence...

- What changes have been implemented due to PPG involvement in your surgery?

- Have you any examples of what a good PPG can achieve?
e.g. changes in service to benefit patient, fundraising, increased patient involvement?

- How do you promote and recruit new members to your PPG?
e.g. email, website, newsletter, flyers?

- Are you a member of NAPP (National Association of Patient Participation)?

- Does your PPG engage with other PPGs in the area?

- How involved are the Practice staff in the PPG?
e.g. do they support the PPG, attend the meetings, just take minutes, etc?

- Anything else to add with regards to sharing PPG best practice?